



*I wish to go to  
Walt Disney World®  
Resort*

Hunter, 6  
leukemia

**Make-A-Wish®**  
METRO NEW YORK AND  
WESTERN NEW YORK

2023 Impact Report

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Phil Lussier, President & CEO & Wish Dad

Fiscal year 2023 brought a gratifying return to “business as usual” in delivering the Make-A-Wish mission as well as making important plans for the future of Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York.

I'm delighted to say that we granted **the wishes of 839 children** from the communities we serve and from around the country who wished to visit New York City. Almost all types of wishes could be granted again, including some of the most popular - domestic travel and visits to theme parks and large venues - which had been paused during the pandemic.

I **am thankful for the entire Make-A-Wish family of supporters** who help make every one of these wishes possible. For our volunteers who help bring wishes to life; for our medical partners who recognize the power of a wish in their plan of care; for our volunteer leaders who provide invaluable guidance; and for our donors whose generosity and unwavering support provide the funds we need to grant wishes now and plan for the future.

**An important undertaking of the year was the development of a new chapter-wide strategic plan.** It is imperative to continually evaluate our work and adapt to meet the needs of our communities. To build on previous accomplishments and integrate new initiatives, we established a rolling three-year strategic plan which will be revised annually, ensuring an ongoing focus on all areas of our organization.

As always, our strategic and tactical imperatives focus on the following key areas:

- **Granting more wishes** to reduce our Covid-era wish pipeline.
- **Ramping up medical outreach** to find more eligible children in our main medical referral sources as well as in under-served communities.
- **Driving revenue growth** to keep pace with the increase in wishes granted and build long-term sustainability.
- **Strengthening our use of data-driven insights** and key performance indicators in planning and reporting.
- **Advancing our efforts to diversify our staff and volunteers** to ensure that we are representative of the individuals and families we serve.
- **Expanding our culture of collaboration** to elevate our collective impact on all stakeholders – internal and external.

We're proud to be among the most trusted non-profits in the country, and it is the trust of our communities that empowers us to fulfill our mission. We are recognized as the #1 most trusted charity operating locally across 50 states (*Morning Consult 2023*), a testament to the integrity and dedication with which we serve wish kids and their families. This trust is both a privilege and a responsibility that we carry with us in every wish we grant, and it fuels our ongoing commitment to bringing hope, strength, and joy to children facing critical illnesses.

It comes from a very personal place when I say thank you to all of you for bringing hope to children when they need it most. You truly do transform lives, one wish at a time.

With gratitude,



Phil Lussier





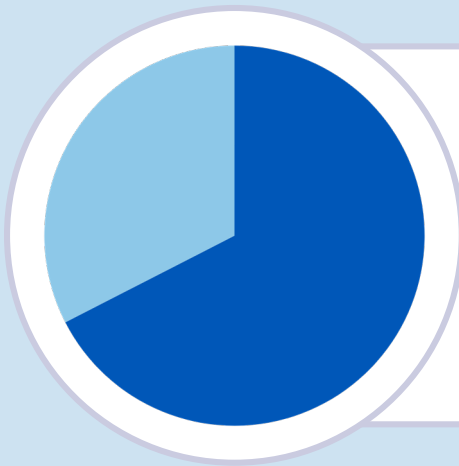
## OUR MISSION

*Together, we create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.*



# Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York: FY23 by the Numbers

## Total Wishes Granted: 839



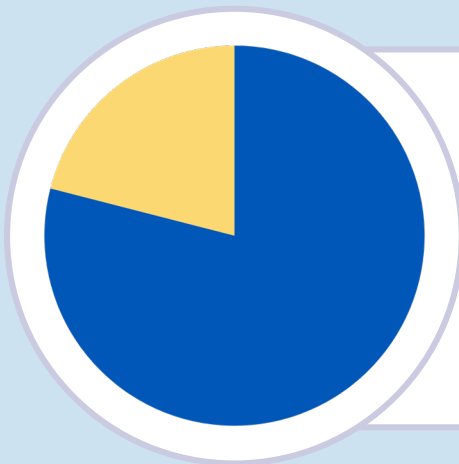
● 67%  
Local Wishes: 566

Wishes granted to children from the local communities we serve in Metro New York and Western New York.

● 33%  
Wish Assists: 273

Wishes granted to children from around the country who wish to visit New York.

## Local Wishes by Region: 566



● 79%  
Metro New York: 450  
New York City and Long Island

Our chapter granted **566 local wishes** in FY23 to children in communities ranging from highly populous Brooklyn to the rural counties of Western New York.

● 21%  
Western New York: 116  
Buffalo, Rochester and surrounding counties

The communities we serve account for 70% of the population of New York State.

## Medical Partner Commitment



**646**  
qualified referrals



**79%**  
of referrals were from a medical professional

**Northwell Health** was the top referring health system in Metro New York, while **Golisano Children's Hospital** (Rochester) and **Roswell Park Cancer Institute** (Buffalo) were the top referring facilities in Western New York.

In FY23, **165 medical professionals** made qualified referrals, an **increase of 19%** from the previous year.

## Volunteer Engagement



**600+**  
Volunteers



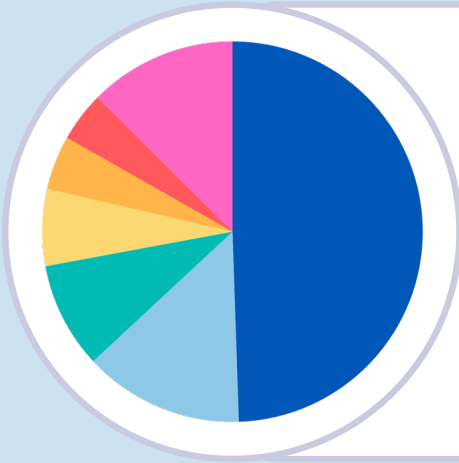
**134**  
New volunteers in FY23

**Volunteers are the backbone of Make-A-Wish.** Whether they are meeting with children and families to discover a wish or working with staff on fundraising events, volunteers are at the heart of this organization.

Chapter wish-granting volunteers could speak **32 different languages** in addition to English to better serve our diverse community.

# Who Are The Wish Kids We Serve?

## Wish Kid Diagnosis



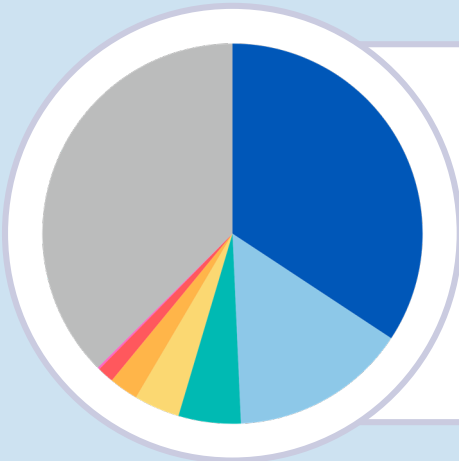
Cancer	49%
Nervous System	14%
Heart	9%
Kidney	7%
Blood	5%
Respiratory	4%
Other	13%

Two of the most common misconceptions about Make-A-Wish is that all of the children we serve have cancer and are terminally ill.

In fact, **less than half of the children we serve are referred with a cancer diagnosis.** There are hundreds of acute and chronic life-threatening illnesses that qualify for a wish.

And, most importantly, **the majority of children whose wishes we grant go on to live typical, healthy lives.**

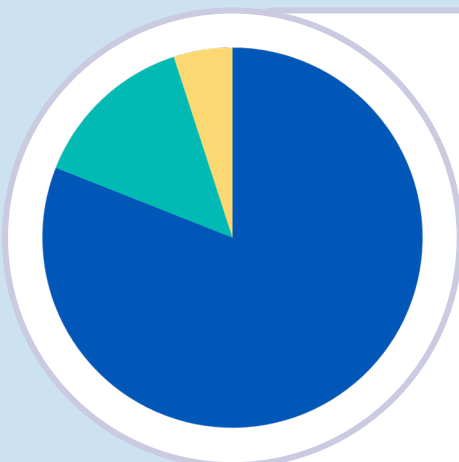
## FY23 Wish Child Race



White	34%	Asian	2%
Black or African American	15%	Two or more races	1%
Other Race	5%	American Indian or Alaska Native	.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4%	Not disclosed	38%

*Race disclosure is not mandatory for wish fulfillment; we respect families' choices not to provide this information.*

## FY23 Wish Child/Family Primary Language



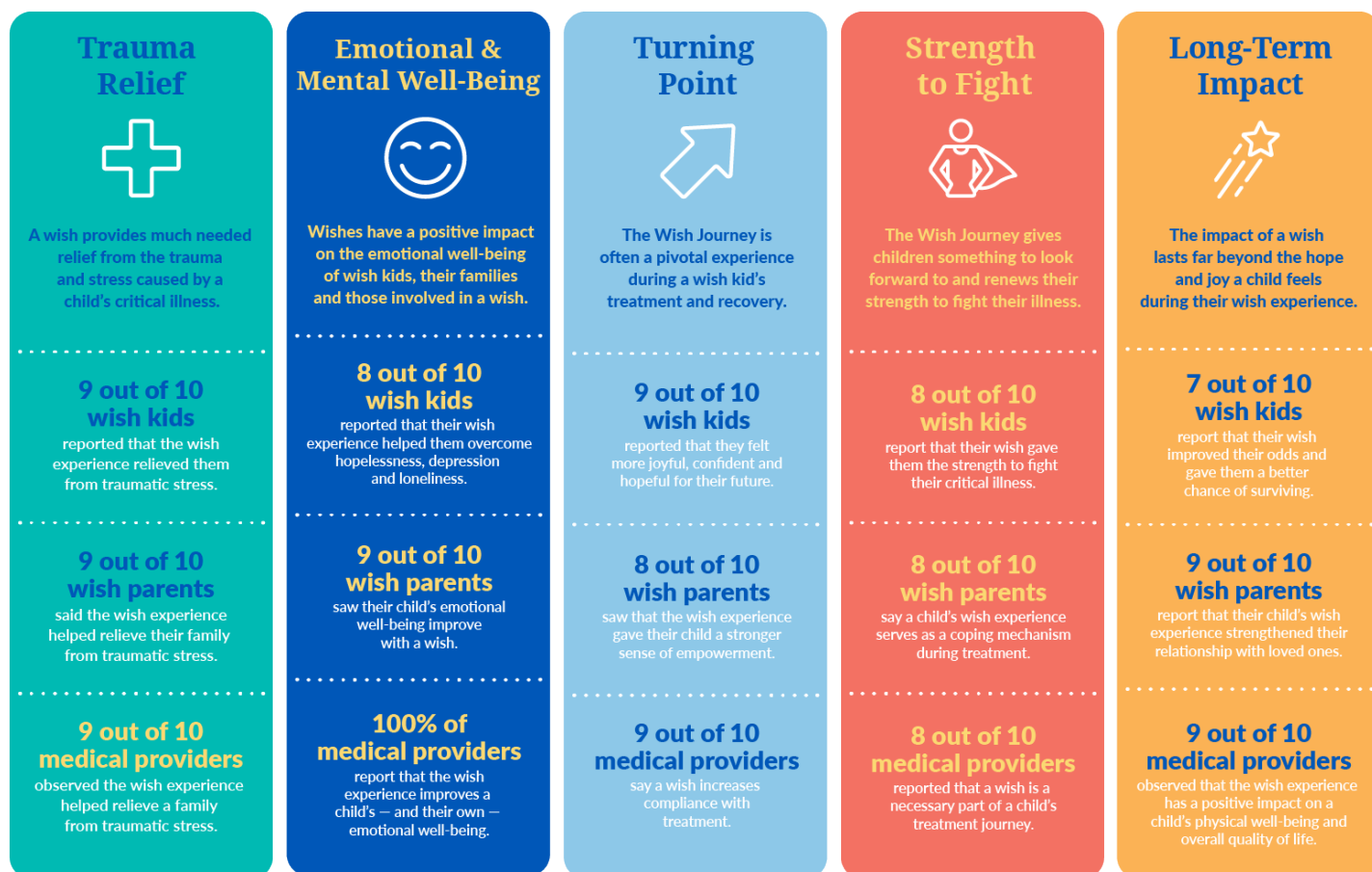
English	81%
Spanish	14%
Other	5%

**In FY23, we conducted 158 wish family calls in 17 languages from Albanian to Wolof,** in the pursuit of providing equitable experiences to the wish families we serve. We also began using **video calls** in FY23 for those who use **American Sign Language.**

**New York City is the most linguistically diverse city in the world** and the chapter utilizes Certified Languages International (CLI) for oral and written language translation.

# Why A Wish is Important: The Impact of Make-A-Wish

A spark of hope can change everything. Research shows that wishes have proven physical and emotional benefits that can give a child better health outcomes and increase their chances for survival.



More information and the full study results are available at [wish.org/impact-study](http://wish.org/impact-study).

## A Physician's Perspective on the Power of a Wish

Jamie E. Flerlage, M.D., M.S., is the Division Chief for Pediatric Hematology Oncology and Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at University of Rochester Medicine's Golisano Children's Hospital. Dr. Flerlage has witnessed firsthand the transformative power of wishes and describes their importance in the plan of care for her patients:

*"One of the neatest things I've witnessed over and over from Make-A-Wish is the hope and peace that helps patients get through the hardest of times. From a holistic approach, it's like a tool in the toolbox. We can lean on Make-A-Wish for that patient and family to help give them hope when they really need it.*

*When patients have these incredible experiences with their whole family, they can come back and during difficult times you can say, tell me about your wish again. And they just immediately brighten and show you the pictures and it can help take them back to a really positive place. I think it's really important. Our job to heal their bodies and their soul is part of that."*

## Wish Kid Spotlight:

### Lily Straightens her Crown and Fights Cancer with a Little Help from Her Friends

"Our journey was not an easy one, especially at the start. No one ever expects to hear the devastating news that their child has cancer, let alone a brain tumor. But Lily was amazingly brave," said Heather, Lily's mom.

It was the fall of 2022 when Lily began to feel sick. A trip to the ER and a CT scan revealed a mass the size of a large lemon on the right side of her brain. After surgery to remove the tumor, the pathology report revealed that Lily's tumor was malignant.

Lily tackled her cancer with a positive attitude. She relied on all things pink, glittery and fun to get through her days. When she started losing her hair, she had the instinct to find her princess crowns to wear. The crowns made her feel brave enough to continue to conquer whatever each day brought.



Her favorite stuffed animals, unicorns Pinkie and Uni, were always by her side to keep her company. On the day she had to have a mediport implanted in her chest, Lily decided that Pinkie should have one as well. She learned how to access Pinkie's mediport so that each week, she would not have to face treatment alone.

Thankfully, her cancer treatments were successful! After a long journey, Lily and her mom were ready to celebrate and make Lily's long awaited wish come true - to see and hug Princesses Elsa and Anna at Walt Disney World® Resort.



Lily squealed with delight as she described experiencing her wish-come-true. "I met Anna and Elsa!" she said. "And Olaf! And I saw the fireworks and went on the Frozen ride five times!"

With each passing day, Lily is gaining more strength and confidence. She no longer feels the need to wear a crown to feel brave and is looking forward to her own happily ever after.



# Managing Our Funds

## Revenue and Other Support



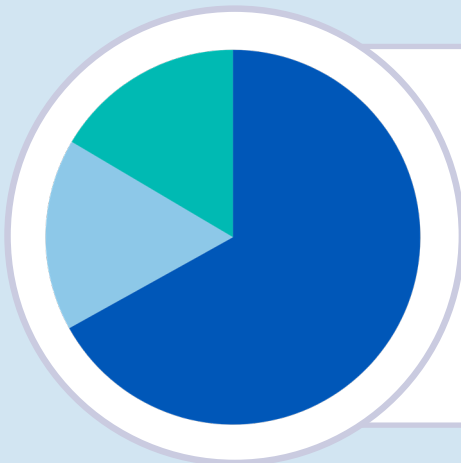
● Individual Giving	\$5,309,731
● Corporate Giving	\$1,501,031
● In-Kind Donations	\$2,853,126
● Events	\$3,197,382
● Grants	\$ 444,021
● Net Investment Gain	\$1,784,272
● Other Income*	\$3,936,289
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$19,025,850</b>

### Your gift matters.

**Individual and corporate giving are our greatest sources of funding.** In-kind donations of goods and services as well as frequent flier miles and hotel loyalty points also help finance our mission.

\*Includes acquisition of Suffolk Chapter net assets, classified as other income/inherent contribution.

## Functional Allocation of Expenses

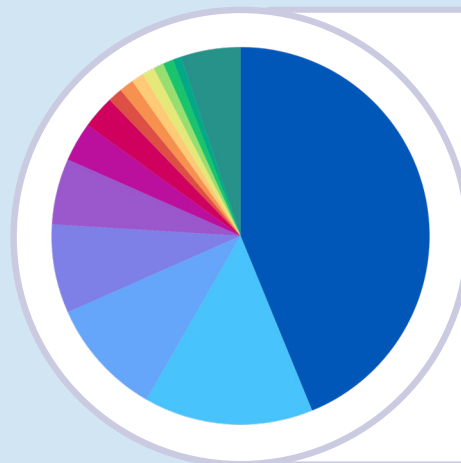


● Program Services	67%
● Fundraising	17%
● Management and General	16%

Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York is proud to be an **Accredited Charity Seal Holder with the Better Business Bureau of Metro New York.**



## Program Expenses: Types of Wishes Granted



● Disney Destination	248	● Animal	7
● Shopping Spree	82	● Playhouse/set	6
● Travel - Hawaii	57	● Trailer/Camper	6
● Travel - Domestic	43	● Construction	5
● Celebrity/Sporting Event	32	● Spa/Hot Tub	5
● Computer	19	● Education/Scholarship	4
● Room Redecoration	16	● Other	29
● ADA/Accessible Equipment	7		

**Visiting a Disney destination remained a popular wish in FY23, accounting for 44% of wishes.**

However, wishes are as unique as the children who make them and we granted a wide array last year, from trips to Hawaii to celebrity meetings to backyard playsets and swimming pools.



# FINANCIALS

MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION® OF METRO NEW YORK AND WESTERN NEW YORK, INC.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2023

REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Public Support:			
Contributions	\$ 9,217,081	\$ 433,980	\$ 9,651,061
Grants	475,128	—	475,128
Total Public Support	9,692,209	433,980	10,126,189
Internal Special Events	4,341,923	—	4,341,923
Less Costs of Direct Benefits to Donors	(1,131,715)	—	(1,131,715)
Total Internal Special Events	3,210,208	—	3,210,208
Investment Gain, Net	1,343,573	440,698	1,784,271
Inherent Contribution	3,741,902	—	3,741,902
Other Income	163,280	—	163,280
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	1,657,513	(1,657,513)	—
<b>Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support</b>	<b>19,808,685</b>	<b>(782,835)</b>	<b>19,025,850</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Program Services:			
Wish Granting	10,127,852	—	10,127,852
Training and Development	250,652	—	250,652
Public Information	477,049	—	477,049
Total Program Services	10,855,553	—	10,855,553
Support Services:			
Fundraising	2,688,478	—	2,688,478
Management and General	2,675,953	—	2,675,953
Total Support Services	5,364,431	—	5,364,431
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>16,219,984</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>16,219,984</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>3,588,701</b>	<b>(782,835)</b>	<b>2,805,866</b>
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	10,405,229	12,056,909	22,462,138
<b>Net Assets - End of Year</b>	<b>\$ 13,993,930</b>	<b>\$ 11,274,074</b>	<b>\$ 25,268,004</b>

**Make-A-Wish Metro New York and Western New York receives no state or federal funding to grant wishes.** We operate solely through donations from caring individuals, corporate partners, community support and foundations. Generous donors ensure that our chapter has the resources needed to provide life-changing wishes when children and families in our community need it most.



## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

**Phil Lussier**  
President & CEO

**Whitney Reichenbacker**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Maureen Fitzgerald**  
Chief Development Officer

**Anika Daughtry**  
Vice President,  
Metro Mission Delivery

**Gina Florescu**  
Chief Brand Officer

**Ben Marchione, CFRE**  
Regional Director,  
Western New York

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